



Panel Discussion Resource

The panel discussion is intended as an opportunity for bishops and other local youth leaders to hear and respond to real, relevant questions about the temple and related issues from youth in their wards. This resource has been created to provide easy access to answers to common questions.

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Section 1: Basic Principles

What is the purpose of the temple?

- In the temple, we receive the ordinances that will enable us to return to the presence of God. We also make covenants to live the laws of the gospel. (Endowed from on High, page 16)
- The ordinances we receive in the temple are necessary in order for us to return to the presence of Heavenly Father. (Endowed from on High, page 2)
- The temple is a spiritual school. It helps us learn more about the purpose of life and the plan of salvation. (Endowed from on High pg 2)
- The temple is where the temple ordinance, called the endowment, is done. (Gospel Topics – Temples)
- The temple is where marriage sealings are done. (Gospel Topics – Temples)

What are the eternal blessings of going to the temple and keeping the covenants made there?

- Temples make it possible to someday return to the presence of God.
“... Ordinances of the temple are absolutely crucial. We cannot return to God’s glory without them” (“Prepare for Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2002, 17–18).
- In the temple families can be sealed together for eternity. The sealing ordinance binds families eternally. (Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple pg 32)
You have to be sealed (temple marriage) in the temple in order to enter and reside in the highest degree in the Celestial Kingdom. (D&C 131:1-4)

What blessing do we receive in this life for going to the temple and keeping the covenants made there?

- We gain a better understanding of the plan of salvation. Understanding that Adam and Eve chose the Fall (to become mortal and have opposition in all things) helps us see the eternal perspective in life. It can help us deal with hard things in our life. (Endowed from on High, pg 3&4)
- In addition to being a place where sacred priesthood ordinances are performed, the temple is a place of peace and revelation. It is a place where spiritual guidance can be received for crucial decisions or concerns. (lds.org topics:temples)
- You can understand things that you have not understood before. You can find new ways to deal with the challenges you face. (True to the Faith)
- In our day, President Gordon B. Hinckley has told us: “If every man in this church who has been ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood were to qualify himself to hold a temple recommend, and then were to go to the house of the Lord and renew his covenants in solemnity before God and witnesses, we would be a better people. There would be little or no infidelity among us. Divorce would almost entirely disappear. So much of heartache and heartbreak would be avoided. There would be a greater measure of peace and love and happiness in our homes. There would be fewer weeping wives and weeping children. There would be a greater measure of appreciation and of mutual respect among us. And I am confident the Lord would smile with greater favor upon us.” (General Conference, October 1995)
- We will be spiritually safe (Neal A Maxwell, Conference April 1987)

- This will help us avoid the heartache that comes with falling to temptation.
- Greater knowledge of the Lord's purposes and teachings.
Power to do all that God wants us to do.
Divine direction and protection as we serve the Lord, our families, and others.
Increased hope, comfort, and peace.
Promised blessings in this life and the next. (LDS.org - Temples - About the Temple Endowment)
- The Lord's glory will be upon His people.
The Lord's servants will leave the temple with the Lord's power, name, and glory, and angels will have charge over them.
We will become a zion people (D&C 97 and 109)

Why are so many symbols used in the temple?

- The Savior has repeatedly used symbols when He taught. (Endowed from on High pg 22-23)
- The most sacred symbolic teachings on earth are received in the temple. (Endowed from on High pg 24)
- The Lord reveals truth to those who are spiritually ready to understand it. Stories with symbols present truth in ways that those who are spiritually prepared understand the meaning of the symbols. Those who are not prepared do not understand the meaning. (Matthew 13:10-12; Endowed from on High page 22-23)

Are the symbols hard to understand?

- The temple ceremony will not be fully understood at first experience. It will be only partly understood. Return again and again and again. Return to learn. Things that have troubled you or things that have been puzzling or things that have been mysterious will become known to you. Many of them will be the quiet, personal things that you really cannot explain to anyone else. But to you they are things known. . (Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple, page 10)
- What we gain from the temple will depend to a large degree on what we take to the temple in the way of humility and reverence and a desire to learn. If we are teachable we will be taught by the Spirit in the temple. (Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple, page 10)
- Some of the symbols are straight forward. Some are harder to understand. "The temple ordinances are so imbued with symbolic meaning as to provide a lifetime of productive contemplation and learning." (Richard G Scott Conference April 1999)

What is the difference between immortality, salvation, exaltation, and eternal life?

- Mortal simply means to be able to die. Immortal means unable to die. Immortality is a free gift of the Savior's atonement to all life on this earth. All will be raised in resurrection to an immortal state. (Alma 40).
- Salvation is spoken of in scripture to different ways. The first is unconditional and simply refers to being resurrected. (D&C 88; 2Ne. 9; 2Ne. 2:4; D & C 76). The other is conditional and is synonymous with exaltation or eternal life (D&C 6:13).
- Eternal Life is the greatest of all of the gifts of God (D&C 14:7). Eternal Life is the name given to the kind of life enjoyed by our Heavenly Father. Exaltation is another name for Eternal Life. (D&C 131; D&C 76; D&C 132)

How did we get the sealing power today?

- Because of apostasy, the blessings of the temple were taken from the earth. In D&C 2:1-3; D&C 110:13-16 Old Testament Prophet, Elijah, restored the Keys of Sealing Power to the Prophet Joseph Smith (Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple, page 27)

What is the “Spirit of Elijah?”

- The spirit that moves us to be involved in Family History and Temple Work (D&C 2:1-3)

Section 2: Temple Ordinances and Covenants

What is a covenant?

A covenant is a sacred agreement between God and a person or group of people. God sets the conditions and we agree to do what He asks us to do. God promises certain blessings if we obey those conditions. (Doctrinal Mastery Core Document - Doctrine Topics #7)

What is an ordinance?

In the Church, an ordinance is a sacred act that has a spiritual meaning, performed by the authority of the priesthood (Gospel Topics; Doctrinal Mastery Core Document - Doctrine Topics #7)

What ordinances do we do in the church?

Some of the ordinances we do in the church include:

- naming and blessing children
- consecrating oil
- administering to the sick and afflicted
- Setting apart to callings in the church (Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple pg 29)
- Sacrament (lds.org - Gospel Topics - Sacrament)
- baptism
- confirmation
- ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood (for men)
- washing and anointing, often called “initiatory ordinances” (Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple pg 32)
- endowment
- temple sealing (husband and wife; children to parents)
(reference for the above list, unless otherwise stated, came from LDS.org - Gospel Topics - Ordinances)

What are “Saving Ordinances”?

- Ordinances that are essential to our exaltation are called “Saving Ordinances.” They include baptism, confirmation, ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood (for men), the temple endowment, and the marriage sealing. With each of these ordinances, we enter into covenants with the Lord. (Lds.org - Gospel Topics - Ordinances)

Are ordinances and covenants always done together?

- Some ordinances do not have covenants associated with them (naming and blessing children, administering to the sick, etc), however, all eternal covenants are connected to an ordinance. (Introduction to Family History Student Manual, chapter 10)
- All of the saving ordinances are accompanied by one or more covenants. (True to the Faith)

What ordinances are done in the temple?

- Baptism and confirmation on behalf of the dead
- Ordination to Melchizedek Priesthood for males who are dead
- Washing and anointing (often referred to as "initiatory ordinances" for both the living and the dead.
- Endowment for yourself and for the dead.

- Sealings for the living and for the dead.

(reference for the above list came from Introduction to Family History Student Manual chapter 10)

What does it mean to be “Born in the Covenant?”

- Children born to parents who have been sealed in the temple are “born in the covenant.” These children automatically become part of a sealed family.
- Children who are not born in the covenant can also become part of an eternal family once their natural or adoptive parents become sealed in the temple.

(reference for all of the above came from LDS.org “About a Temple Sealing)

When can I be proxy for the initiatory, endowment, and sealing?

Can I be a proxy for sealings before I’m married?

- Once we have received these blessing for ourself, we can do them for the dead.
- Yes, you can do sealings for the dead before you are married.

(Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple pg1)

What is the Washing and Anointing / Initiatory?

- The ordinances of washing and anointing are often referred to as “initiatory ordinances” because they begin the endowment. (Introduction to Family History Student Manual chapter 10)
- Boyd K Packer said, “Associated with the endowment are washings and anointings - mostly symbolic in nature, but promising definite, immediate blessings as well as future blessings. (Introduction to Family History Student Manual, chapter 10)

What is the endowment?

- The endowment is an ordinance needed to return to Heavenly Father. We are taught what must be done to gain exaltation (Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple pg 32; LDS.org - About the Temple Endowment)
- Brigham Young said, "Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels." (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young, pg 302)
- The temple endowment is received in two parts:
The first part, called the "initiatory," you receive privately. It includes special blessings regarding your divine heritage and potential.
The second part, you will receive the remainder of your endowment in a group setting along with others who are attending the temple. During this part, the plan of salvation is presented, including the Creation of the world, the Fall of Adam and Eve, the Atonement, the Apostasy, and the Restoration, as well as instruction on how all people can return to the presence of the Lord. Some of the endowment is presented through video and some by temple officiators. (LDS.org - Temples - About the Temple Endowment)
- The endowment includes covenants we make with the Lord. (LDS.org - Temples - About the Temple Endowment)
- At the conclusion of the endowment, participants symbolically enter the Lord's presence as they enter the celestial room. (LDS.org - Temples - About the Temple Endowment)

What is taught in the endowment?

- We are taught what must be done to gain exaltation (Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple pg32)
- We are taught about the purpose of life, the mission and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and Heavenly Father's plan for his children. (Temples pg 79)
- We are taught the love Heavenly Father has for His children (Henry B Eyring "Special Witness of Christ" video on LDS.org)

What covenants are made in the endowment?

- We promise to observe the law of virtue and chastity, be charitable, benevolent, tolerant, and pure. We covenant to devote both talent and material to build the kingdom of God on earth. (Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple pg 34-35)

What is the 'new and everlasting covenant?'

- It is the sum total of all gospel covenants and obligations. This covenant includes all ordinances of the gospel. It is everything. It is the fullness of the gospel. (Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple pg 34)

Where do I renew my temple covenants?

- The first time you go to the temple, you receive your own endowment and if sealed to your spouse, you receive that covenant. From then on, every time you attend the temple you are going through in proxy for someone who is deceased, preferably a deceased ancestor. You may review or be reminded of the covenants previously made, but it is not a renewal of your covenants. All covenants are renewed at the sacrament service in your individual church unit. That is one reason that the sacrament service is the most sacred meeting outside the Temple. (Ensign, I have a Question, March 1995)

Section 3: Worthiness and Temple Recommends

Why do we need a recommend to get inside a temple?

- Those who enter the temple must show their faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ by living the gospel and keeping the commandments. (Endowed from on High, pg 6)
- The temple is a holy place. Bishops and branch presidents make sure that those who enter the temple are prepared and worthy. (Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, page 74)

What is a limited use recommend?

- Limited use recommends are issued to children for sealing to their parents. They are also issued to youth ages 12 and older to perform baptisms for the dead.

Am I worthy to attend the temple?

- The temple is a holy place. Bishops and branch presidents make sure that those who enter the temple are prepared and worthy. Before you go to the temple, you will have a special interview with your bishop or branch president and your stake or mission president. They will help you decide if you are worthy to attend the temple. They will talk to you about your testimony of the Church. They will ask you if you keep the commandments, attend church meetings, support the Church leaders, obey the Word of Wisdom, pay tithing, are morally clean, and are honest. They will help you know what to do to be worthy to enter the temple. (Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, page 74; Endowed from on High, page 6. There is more good discussion on this on page 10 and 11 of Endowed from on High)

Why do I have to pay tithing to go to the temple?

- Those who enter the temple must show their faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Paying a full tithing one way to show that. (Endowed from on High pg 6)
- The Lord has set standard of worthiness to enter the temple. Tithing is one of them. ("Being Worthy to Enter the Temple," Ensign Aug 2010)

Does the Bishop talk about my temple worthiness with my parents? Counselors? Anyone?

- Bishops are instructed that confidentiality in handling these interviews is of the utmost importance. (Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints pg 31)

Section 4: Temple Clothing and the Garment

Temple Clothes

- When you go to the temple to do temple work, you change from street clothes into white temple clothing. The white temple clothing is a symbol for purity. (Endowed from On High, page 24)

In the temple, when I change clothes, is it done in private?

- In the temple, the ideal of modesty is carefully maintained. When you change from your street clothes into temple clothes you do this in a dressing room, where each individual is provided with a locker and a dressing space that is completely private. You can then put your street clothes into a locker, lock it, and take the key with you throughout the temple. (Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, page 32)

The Temple Garment

- When you receive temple ordinances you make a covenant with God to wear special garments, under your clothes, for the rest of your life. The garment represents sacred covenants. It fosters modesty and becomes a shield and protection against temptation (Endowed from On High, page 24, 25).
- The garment provides a constant reminder of the covenants you have made in the temple. You should treat it with respect at all times. You should not expose it to the view of those who do not understand its significance, and you should not adjust it to accommodate different styles of clothing. When you wear it properly, it provides protection against temptation and evil. (LDS.org - Gospel Topics - Garments)
- Wearing the garment is an outward expression of an inward commitment to follow the Savior. (LDS.org - Gospel Topics - Garments)
- The church put out a great video about garments. You can find it on Mormon Newsroom and here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkTz_NQqKA8&feature=youtu.be

Can I wear my wedding dress in the temple?

- Sisters may wear their wedding dress for their temple wedding as long as it is:
 - White
 - Have long sleeves
 - Be modest in design and fabric
 - Have no train
 - Be free from elaborate ornamentation

(Endowed from on High, page 30)

Section 5: Sensitive Topics and Personal Questions

Why are the temple ceremonies secret?

- The temple ceremonies are not secret, but sacred. We do not use the wording of temple ordinances outside the temple, other than what is used in scripture. We safeguard the sacredness of the ordinances and covenants. Any person who is willing to be baptized, proceed to conduct their life in harmony with gospel principles and obtain a temple recommend, may enter the temple and be instructed as any other member of the Church. (THE HOLY TEMPLE, Boyd K. Packer, pages 75-79.)
- We do not discuss the temple ordinances outside the temples. It is not that the knowledge is limited to a select few, and that others never learn of them. It is quite the opposite. With great effort, every soul is urged to qualify and prepare for the temple experience. ("Temples" magazine; page 29-30; The Holy Temple by Pres Boyd K Packer)
- The ceremonies are confidential, lest they be given to unprepared: (page 1 "Preparing to Enter The Holy Temple pg 2)

If I'm not planning on serving a mission, do I need to wait until I get married to go through the temple?

- Most likely you will receive your endowment shortly before you serve a full-time mission or before you are married in the temple. Single members in their late teens or early twenties who have not received a mission call and are not engaged to be married in the temple are generally not recommended to receive their own endowment. (Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints pg 79)
- New members wait at least one year after their baptism and confirmation before receiving their endowment. (Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints pg 80)
- Receiving your own endowment is an important matter. Discuss it with your bishop. Pray and ponder to know when you are ready (Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, pg 79)
- Members of the Church who are at least 18 years old may receive their temple endowment if they are faithful and prepared. Because temple ordinances and covenants are sacred and have eternal significance, members must be morally worthy and sufficiently able to understand the solemn responsibilities they will assume as they make covenants with God. Members who have received their mission call or are engaged to be married in the temple may receive the endowment. The bishop can also counsel other adult members who wish to receive the endowment. (lds.org - temples)

I have heard some people say that what goes on in the temple is different.

Why do some people love the temple and others feel strange?

- The temple is different from other houses of worship. (Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints pg 21)
- What we do inside a temple is different from our weekly Sunday service in our chapel buildings. Our weekly worship service is not ceremony based like the temple is. (Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints pg 41)
- It helps if you realize that the teaching in the temple is done in a symbolic fashion. (Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints pg 31)

- It helps to realize that many teaching styles are used in the temple: visual, motion, repetition, etc. Some people may find that different than ways they are used to learning.
- To people familiar with the Old Testament, it is not different or strange. (Exodus and Leviticus; LDS.org - History of Temples)

What can I say to others about my experience in the temple?

- You can talk about what the interior of the temple looks like, and you can freely share the feelings you have in the temple. However, temple covenants and ordinances, including the words used, are too sacred to be discussed in detail outside the temple. By avoiding discussion of these sacred things outside the temple, we protect them from mocking, ridicule, or disrespect. Do not be casual when talking about your experiences in the temple. (Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, pg 80)

What can I do to prepare myself to enter the Temple?

- Have a testimony of Heavenly Father, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost.
- Be Worthy (see Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day saints pg 30-31)
- Be humble with a desire to learn. Humility is important in order to be taught. (D&C 136:32-33)
- Understand that receiving temple ordinances and covenants is essential to gaining eternal life
- Understand the importance of wearing the temple garments every day for the rest of your life.
- Understand the importance of keeping your covenants

What do I do at my First Visit? What is a “Live Endowment?”

- Your first visit to the temple is referred to as doing a “Live Endowment” because you are doing it for a living person, yourself. After your that, you will be doing it for the dead.
- Obtain a temple recommend from a member of your bishopric and your stake presidency. Bring your recommend with you. You will always need your recommend to get into the temple, whether you are doing the temple work for yourself or for the dead.
Your temple recommend needs to be renewed every two year through your the same process.
- Make an appointment with the temple. They will let you know other details like what time to arrive.
You only need to make an appointment your first time. When you are doing temple work for the dead, you do not need an appointment. You just need to know the temple hours of operation.
- Clothing: Wear sunday dress to the temple. Once you are in the temple, you will need to have the appropriate temple clothes to wear. You can bring your own, or bring money to rent them at the temple. (Temple clothing rental is not available at all temples)

- Escorts: When you go through the temple for the first time you can have an “Escort” with you. It can be a family member or friend of the same gender who has previously been through the temple. A temple worker may also be your escort.
- Bring a pair of garments with you. Do not put them on before you go to the temple. You will do that at the temple. Once you have decided your correct size of garments, you will need to buy more to wear every day. You buy them through the Church Distribution Services.

(Reference for the list and information above is found in Endowed from on High, pg 28-30)

Does it matter who officiates at your sealing?

- All men set apart as sealers are given the same sealing authority. If you are sealed by the President of the Church you are not sealed any differently than any other sealer. (THE HOLY TEMPLE, page, 35, 60-64)

Which Temple has a “Holy of Holies”? And what is the purpose of the Holy of Holies?

- The Salt Lake Temple has a Holy of Holies accessible just off the south side of the Celestial Room
- According to Boyd K Packer, “Hidden away in the central part of the temple is the Holy of Holies, where the President of the Church may retire when burdened down with heavy decisions to seek an interview with Him whose Church it is. The prophet holds the keys, the spiritual keys and the very literal key to this one door in that sacred edifice.” (THE HOLY TEMPLE, page 4)

What is the purpose of being given a “new name” received in the temple?

- D & C 130: 10-11; Rev. 2:17—The new name is a key word that will be used the day you receive your endowment. The husband receives his wife’s new name in a veil ceremony prior to their being sealed. It will also be used after death. Those who come into the Celestial Kingdom will be given a white stone with a new name written on it. This will become a Urim and Thummim to each who receives one.

How long does a recent convert need to be a member of the Church before they can qualify for a temple recommend?

- The waiting period is 1 year from date of confirmation. Individuals who have been a member for a year and have been married civilly, need to wait one year from date of civil marriage. An exception would be made in countries where the law of the land requires a civil marriage first. (Handbook 1, p12).

Do children who die need any temple ordinances done for them?

- A child who dies under the age of eight dies before the age of accountability. Therefore, he or she does not need the saving ordinances of baptism, endowment, or male ordination to the priesthood. However, a child does need to be sealed to his parents if he was not born in the covenant.

- In the case of the child who died at age 11, he died after the age of accountability and should receive by proxy all of the saving ordinances of the gospel, the same as an individual who dies as an adult.
- Usually, ordinances performed by proxy are not performed until one year after the date of death.

(Information above came from Ensign, I Have a Question, March 1974)

Suggestions on what do when a family member or close friend can not witness a temple marriage because they do not have a temple recommend:

- Recognize that this can be a hard, emotional situation.
- Invite the person to come to the temple with the wedding party. There is a spirit and influence on the temple grounds that is not found in other places. Some temples have visitors center.
- Arrange to have someone wait with that family member. Don't leave the person alone.
- In some temples a special room is provided where parents who are not eligible to enter the temple itself may meet with a qualified individual who can answer their questions.
- The question might come up: should we be married civilly first so they can witness the marriage, then we would wait for the necessary year before entering the temple?

(Information above came from Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple, page 12-13)